

the water tower.

uvm's alternative newsmag



volume 7 - issue 1 - tuesday, january 26, 2010 - uvm, burlington, vt

your shred syllabus



Shredding 151: Fundamentals of Gnar Culture

Exploring Relationships between UVM Students and Winter Rec Activities

instructors maxbookman and leamcclellan

Prerequisites:

Shredding 001: Basics of Eating Shit
Shredding 010: Exiting the Lift without Falling
Shredding 011: Deleting Ski and Snowboard Club Emails
Economics 009: \$400 Investments

Course Objectives:

Master Key Vocab
Dank - All-encompassing word for "really good"
Gnar - Originally surfer slang, now means anything from "awesome" to "terrible"
Heady - See: dank
Pow - Common exclamation in Batman and Robin, also used to describe heady snowfall
Shit Bricks - What happens when temperatures drop low enough to make your large intestine feel the chill
Stowe Dogs - Ill spot for dank munch, not to be confused with your dawgs at Stowe

Obtain Comprehension of Steez Anatomy

- Hat crocheted by pothead girlfriend
- Pricy brand-name goggles
- Shitty moustache
- “Gangster” handkerchief
- Oversized neon jacket
- Pants (Bagginess ratio to Jacket, 10:1)

Lesson Schedule:

Lesson 1: On Munch

Reading:
 - *Why the Grundle “Take 5” is the Best On-Campus Pre-Shred Munch*, Intro
 - “Do Microwave Burritos, PBR, and 180 Flips Mix? A Vomitific Account” p4-9
 - *The Bagel: How to Make a \$3 Bagelwich Cost \$6.75*, Chapters 2-3

Lesson 2: Pre-Slope Ponderings

Reading:
 - “We Should Hit the Glades First,” p62-71
 - “Spoonie Says its Mad Icy,” p5
 - “Didn’t We Say We’d Leave By 10?” p13

Lesson 3: The Lift

Reading:
 - “Is the Singles Line Really Faster? An Exhaustive Study”
 - *There’s a Child in our Gondola. Should We Blaze Anyway?* p183-205
 - *The Parents of the Child in our Gondola are Getting Ski Patrol: How to Disappear Fast*. Intro

Lesson 4: Hitting The Trees

Reading:
 - *We’ll Meet You at the Bottom: Breaking the News to your Noob Friend*, Chapter 1
 - *The Chronic Gnarnia: How Not Smoking Bud on the Ill Tree Trail Helps You Remember How to Find it Next Time*

Lesson 5: At the Park

Reading:
 - “Riding Past the Pack of 14-Year-Olds Camping at the Park”
 - *Bail Out! Not Just For Obama*
 Journal 1 Due:
 - Are you gonna hit the kicker today? If yes, then explain how hard you’re gonna fall. If no, then explain why you’re such a huge pussy.

Lesson 6: Getting Free Cheese

Reading:
 - “Cutting the Cheese: Confessions of a Cider House-Cabot Freeloader”
 - *Am I Really Too Cheap To Buy a 50 Cent Cider Donut? An Introspective Journey*

Lesson 7: Your Friend Who Flaked Out

Brainstorm:
 - What excuses has your friend used to flake out? Too hung over? It’s too cold out? Death in the family? Upset that healthcare isn’t going to pass?

Lesson 8: The Sensitive Skier

Reading:
 - “How To Deal With Your Emotions When a Baby on a Leash Out-Skis You”
 - *My Butt Hurts: A True Story*
 - “What the Eff is Wrong With You People?! ...What to do when No One is as Cold as You,” p348-359

Course Expectations:

Classroom Attire

-Standards are certainly evolving. The old wisdom was “wear whatever’s warm.” These days, it’s more like “wear whatever most resembles the Las Vegas Strip on acid.”

Buzzkills

-You are expected to come to class prepared to shred gnar. Committing buzzkills will result in a 10 point reduction from your gnar score. Buzzkills include remembering that you forgot your pass halfway down I-89, bringing your girlfriend’s gloves instead of your own, leaving the bowl in the car, and complaining about the conditions here versus “that time I went out West.”

Attendance

-You are expected to actually use the season pass Mom and Dad spent hundreds of dollars on. Going twice and then just talking about those two times for the rest of the season do not count. More than three Saturday absences will reduce your gnar score. Weekday attendance = extra credit.

get
inside
me

news
old: burqas
new: freedom robes
by paulgross

reflections
decidedly
undecided
by lizcantrell

créatif stuffé
once there was
a girl...
by alextownsend

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inbox

outraged by nativity scene outrage

I found this article to be thoroughly irritating. It's another prime example of someone assuming that EVERYONE that tours "Groovy UV" is there only because they are a pothead hippie atheist. Ever think that most people that view a traditional nativity scene at Christmas time wouldn't say "I am so offended! There is no way I'm going to this college now!"

You are actually "fucking" offended by this? I find it offensive that you want to set up an atheist celebration of a "holiday" created by a TV show where the highlight of the celebration is to complain about things that happened to you. Where can I sign up??

There is nothing worse than a hypocritical atheist. Since you are so offended by a Christmas decoration, I hope you're equally offended by holiday music, Christmas lights/trees, and presents given on December 25th. So you will be sitting at home alone like any other non-special day, refusing feverishly any gift given to you? Your article is only considered legitimate if this is true. If so, enjoy festus!

-Brianna Kozak

Sometimes reading **the water tower** makes our readers want to get naked and fight the power. But most of the time, they just send emails. Send your thoughts on anything in this week's issue to

thewatertowernews@gmail.com

the shit list

with macsmith

Mark McGwire The retired slugger from the St. Louis Cardinals admitted to using steroids after 1993, and especially during 1998, when he hit a single season record 70 home runs. This marks the first time in history ESPN has covered baseball-related material during the NFL playoffs. McGwire alleges that he didn't take the steroids to hit home runs, and that they didn't help. Michael Vick started a dog fighting ring to stay out of jail, but that didn't help either.

Pat Robertson and Rush Limbaugh After the devastation of a 7.1 magnitude earthquake in Haiti, Robertson had the stones to offer up his reasoning for its cause: a pact Haitians made with the Devil for their independence from the French, and Limbaugh is urging Americans to not give aid. There's not much of a joke except for the way their brains work. **the water tower** supports aid, as well as challenges these old bigots to a cage match.

On a much lighter note It's been almost two weeks since I've heard that song "Fireflies" by Owl City on the radio, and I couldn't be happier.

Massachusetts I'm not upset that Massachusetts elected a Republican. I'm not even upset that because they did this, healthcare reform in the country is essentially dead. I am upset, however, because I'm pretty sure that Scott Brown was elected based entirely on Boston sports. I haven't met anyone who knows anything about this man more than the fact that he drives a truck, was a naked model and that Doug Flutie likes him. What put the nail in the coffin was when competitor Democrat Martha Coakley referred to revered Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling as a Yankees fan. She's a dumbass, and so are most Massholes.

Avatar =Pocahantas+The Last Samurai+Matrix Revolutions+Fern Gully. Right??

the water tower.

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with michaelcieslak

The main story this week is the AFC and NFC Championship games. The Jets were able to sneak in there on the back of pretty boy Mark Sanchez. And if you do one thing this weekend please watch the NFC game. Unfortunately, that one is on FOX so I must administer the same warning I did during the MLB playoffs: When watching sporting events on FOX you are subject to listening to Joe Buck.... In other shocking sports news, Tiger Woods is addicted to sex and Mark McGwire took steroids... The Australian Open has kicked off in Melbourne and phenom Maria Sharapova made an early exit, losing to fellow Russian hottie Maria Kirilenko.

It was amazing. The match was pretty good too... Available just in time for the World Cup this summer are "stab proof" vests that even represent your favorite country by showing the flag. Why these are necessary? I DON'T KNOW!... UVM's two basketball teams are having strong seasons. Men's Basketball losing it's first conference game this past Thursday and the Women's team losing it's first conference game to BU on Monday. On ice the Men's team is in eighth in a close Hockey East, but a good weekend against UMass could move them into fourth. Their Power Play has been doing better and they are playing well winning 5 of their last 6.

the news in brief

with paulgross

"America will never dream of security until we have it in Palestine."

-The big man himself, **Osama Bin Laden**, in a newly released audio-tape lauding the Christmastime bomb attempt and arguing that the reason for continued al-Qaeda aggression is America's perpetual and indeed "unshakeable" alliance with Israel. What a crazy, cowardly asshole.

"The FEC has created a regime that allows it to select what political speech is safe for public consumption."

-Supreme Court Justice **Anthony Kennedy**, in the majority opinion in the recently decided case, Citizens United vs. FEC. The decision removed virtually all restrictions on corporate political campaign spending arguing that since a corporation is legally a person, such restrictions are an undue infringement on free speech. The problem is, even though corporations have some of the same rights as people, they under no circumstances have *all of them*. Does McDonalds have the right to bear arms?

"They must comply with the law."

-Diosdado Cabello, the director of Venezuelan state-run telecommunications on why Radio Caracas Television will no longer be permitted to broadcast on Venezuelan television. The network, apparently, failed to air the entire pro-government speech that Chavez recently made, convincing him that they are probably supporting a coup against him. Viva libre, except not.

"We must produce a firm response in the face of... burgeoning radical behavior."

-French President **Nicholas Sarkozy's** Union for a Popular Movement party, explaining why a ban on the burqa is imperative to protect French society from the rapidly escalating danger of... people who are not French? Way to make good use of your position, Sarko.

"As long as they are both still alive, they will try to stay together."

-**Julia Newth**, a wildlife researcher in the UK, speaking not about people but about swans. Apparently, two swans (a male and a female) under observation in the UK recently "divorced," each returning from their northerly migration with a new partner in tow. According to wildlife experts, this is extremely rare and no one is entirely sure what to make of it. I've heard that the woman was cheating, but some people say the man's gambling problems left their marriage in the dumps.

the water tower is UVM's alternative newsmag and is a weekly student publication at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont.

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Our generation stands at a crossroads. As we walk through a world ever connected to a thunderstorm of news and reflection, we risk losing the ability to think for ourselves. **the water tower** is for us non-thinkers. We provide witty and sometimes outlandish opinions so that you don't have to come up with them yourselves. We can't promise that you will agree with everything that we say, but you will respect the tenacity we have to say it. Every once in a while we will generate something that is truly thought provoking. We are the reason people can't wait for Tuesday. We are **the water tower**.

old: burqas new: freedom robes

by paulgross

The new frontlines in the global war on racism (not terror!) have emerged, and they're being found somewhere rather unlikely—Western Europe. Starting with the recent Swiss ban on minarets (those tall spires found on mosques), growing anti-Islamic sentiment in wealthy Western European countries has begun to manifest itself both in the form of growing ultra-right wing parties and pretty transparently racist social policies.

In the Netherlands, the openly “anti-immigration and Islamization” (read: bigoted) party, The Party For Freedom, (led by a scary looking blond man by the name of Geert Wilders) has become the third largest opposition party and came in second in the European Parliament elections.

In Switzerland, the conservative Volkspartei (People's Party) has successfully garnered support to pass bans on the muezzin, or the Islamic call to prayer, and on the construction of new minarets, making it impossible for Swiss Muslims to know what time of day is prayer time and to construct their houses of worship in the traditional (and frankly beautiful) architectural style.

The newest battle against European Muslim immigrants, however, is taking place in France where President Sarkozy and his Union for a Popular Movement are attempting to pass a law forbidding women from wearing a burqa or a niqab (full body and face covering garments) in public, enforceable by hefty fines. Sarko is spinning this new proposed law as a defense of the rights of women, when in actuality it is a misguided, racially-charged assault.

Supporters of this new law cite fears of “growing Islamization in France” and the formation of “parallel, not integrated, communities.” What they fail to note is that nothing in the Islamic faith requires women to cover their entire bodies and faces—the decision to do so is purely a cultural one, usually these cultures happen to also be Islamic, but the religion does not require the donning of a burqa or niqab.

Thus, what this French law is doing is punishing people for their cultural identification and the way they choose to dress, which is an attack on the rights of women, not a defense of them.

Obviously, feminists, and indeed most people of Western sensibilities take issue with cultural practices that pressure women into hiding themselves from society. This law, however, does nothing to combat that cultural ideology. It merely punishes people for behaving in a way they feel is culturally appropriate and widens the divide between mainstream French society and the growing population of Islamic immigrants.

“Supporters of this new law cite fears of the formation of parallel, not integrated, communities”

As it has been rightly pointed out, the French would never pass a law banning nuns from wearing their headdresses, or requiring Catholics to allow female priests, even though these practices are arguably equally damaging or almost as damaging to the rights of women in particular cultural groups. The reason why the French would never pass these laws is that Western societies typically value a right to autonomy and cultural identification, which includes the way we dress and the positions of power we seek to assume.

At the point where the French grant these rights to all groups except certain Muslim cultural subsets for no particular reason, we are no longer dealing with the protection of women's rights, we instead are dealing with discriminating treatment based on culture, commonly known as bigotry. ■

me and b.h.o. one year later

by maxbookman

I'll never forget the first time we met. It was in 2004. I was committed to someone else at the time, but I remember how damn impressive he was. I had one of those thoughts you're not supposed to have when you're in a serious relationship: “Well, if things don't work out, at least this new guy looks pretty good.” He was just so full of hope and excitement, plus he was smart, and youthful to boot.

I ran into him every now and then over the next few years. Things didn't really speed up until 2007, when he started taking a serious interest in me. After that he'd talk to me all the time. Almost on a daily basis. Every time he would speak, it was as

“But I guess maybe I was the naïve one, because things didn't stay so perfect for long.”

if he had unrestricted access to the deepest reaches of my soul, finding exactly the right words to address what I was feeling. Sure, he was totally inexperienced, and probably a little naïve (especially in retrospect), but I just felt like I could trust him; like I could look at everything that is wrong and messed up in the world and know that he had the magical power to fix it all.

The current guy I was with was a dud. I had no clue why we were together, but as these things happen, we were. He was a rich party boy back in college, but in his later years, he laid off the booze and became one of those boring Come to Jesus mother-fuckers. We just didn't see eye to eye on anything. I knew that me and him weren't long for this world. I was just counting down the days.

Anyway, things got really serious in the summer of 2008. The tension was outrageous. I couldn't wait for the moment when we'd seal the deal. It was all I thought about. By the fall, it finally happened. I'll never forget the date. November 4th, 2008. I was so happy. It was all so new and exciting, and he was such a welcome change from all the other guys I'd been with. Nobody I know, including myself, had been with a black man before. Well, he's half black, but for some reason, when someone is even just a little black, people think of them as black.

But I guess maybe I was the naïve one, because things didn't stay so perfect for long. I noticed things were starting to change between us when he started talking to me differently. It was less and less about hopes and dreams for the future and more and more about dealing with the dull reality of the present. While we were flirting, he told me that me and him could accomplish anything together. But it's not like that anymore. I suddenly realized that our whole relationship was really just based on talk. More bad thoughts came into my head. What if he was a liar? What if he was just using me? What if he is an idiot and doesn't know what he's doing?

I complain about him to my friends, but they all just say “you knew what you were getting into,” but I'm not so convinced. I think he's better than the man he is now. He got me hook line and sinker with that hope and change stuff, and it's time he comes through. For me.

Maybe someone else will come around, or maybe they won't. In the meantime, he's the best I got. But if I've learned one thing from this experience, it's that there's a lot of disappointment in this whole game. I'm not sure if I want to play it anymore. ■

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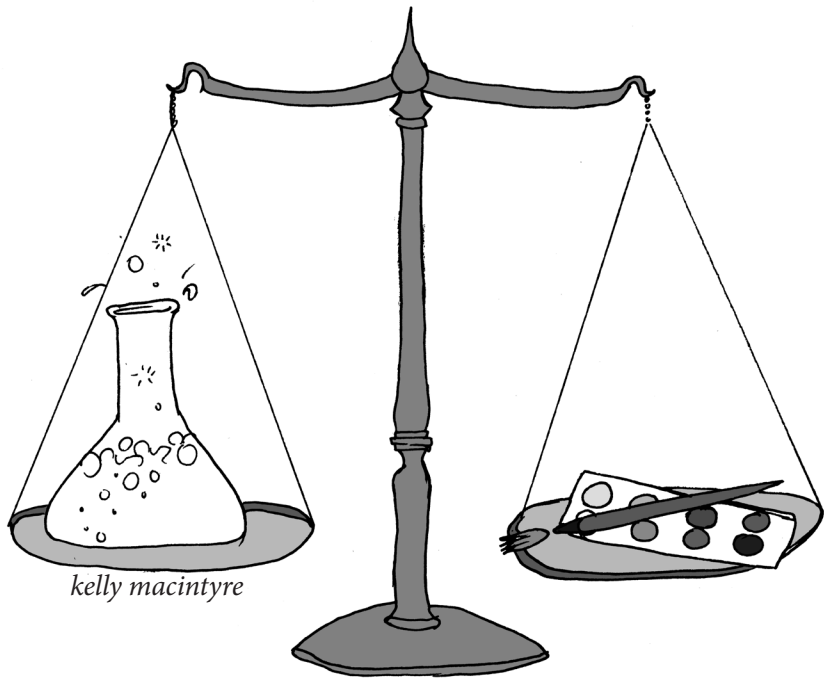
by lizcantrell

Deciding between corn flakes and cocoa puffs is a serious debate for me. Choosing between the treadmill and the elliptical is enough to send my stress levels into outer space. I would rather my professor hand me an assignment for a 15 page paper than let me choose my own 5 page one. See a trend? I am chronically indecisive, and that's why I'm living life as an undeclared freshman.

With next semester just around the

ality from the first few months.

This begs the question: is it better to declare a major you're not totally interested or 100% in love with just so you have some direction? If you do that you risk finding out you don't like that subject, questioning yourself, changing your major, and wasting a whole lot of time. These are, as I see them, the "consequences" of deciding too early. On the other hand, if you wait it out until the end of your sophomore year, you might be too late to



corner, it's an appropriate time to evaluate the "ins and outs" of being an undecided first year. How do you know what classes to take? How can you predict what is most beneficial in the long run? All of us confused first-years need a manual for how to stay afloat in undecided waters, so let's go.

Some freshmen assume being undecided means taking whatever you want and having "total freedom." They could not be more wrong. A lot of classes, such as studio art, are for majors and minors only, so you might have problems in that area. Also, you've got distribution requirements to consider. If you're drowning in a sea of doubt, knocking out some of your requirements is a sensible approach for your first year. However, some incoming freshmen fall into the trap of "Wow that class sounds sick! I'll take that." Then, when they take a look at their handy CATS audit, they realize they've done absolutely nothing to chip away at their requirements, and the panic sets in. Life becomes a second semester scramble to make up for that "total freedom" men-

do a heavy major like Biology or Chemistry, or you'll have to really buckle down to get all your courses in.

Clearly, there are a few problems with being undecided. You have no direction, you feel lame next to all your friends talking about their big fancy majors and life plans, and you just want to declare and be done with it. You're stressed, you're pissed, and you have no clue what to do. The fact that every advice-giving adult you meet says, "Oh well that's great! I was undecided, that's the best way to go!" does not help your situation.

The way I see it, finding your true calling inevitably takes the form of fulfilling requirements (however tiresome it may be) and stumbling across your interests as you go along. Everyone finds their niche eventually, it just takes some longer than others. So take everything with a grain of salt, learn from your first semester mistakes, and move on. Look ahead to future years, where you'll stroll confidently into class, assured of your choice, and smirk at the other kids who are ready to rip their hair out from changing majors. Feel free to pat yourself on the back.

surfing the stars

with lizcantrell

Aquarius: January 20th- February 18th

Happy New Year and Happy Birthday to all you Aquarius people out there! The stars anticipate that you will think outside the box this year, stretch your mind, and discover new talents. You will most likely find this talent in the area of English cheese rolling, speaking Korean Finnish, or in memorizing the Guinness Book of World Records (in Korean Finnish of course).

Also, you tend to have unnatural powers of discernment and prediction. These will be undeniably useful in the coming months. For example, you always know that the campus bus will be late (or packed with people who are just more on time than you are), the Grundle will give you a stomachache, and you will never know what a catamount really is or where it lives...

4

not everyone can roll

by benciviletti

I always knew I had a talent. Maybe it was elusive or very obscure but I knew it was there. Recently I believe I've finally found this inner gift, and I'm ready to share it with the world so that others can benefit. I may be number one in the world at not getting girls. Yes, you may be skeptical; you may say "that's not possible" but I've been training for ten years and I can say with confidence that no one is better, or worse, depending on your point of view. So for all you guys out there just wishing these attractive girls would leave you alone, I have my best techniques outlined in the following paragraphs for your edification.

It's best to start training at a young age. A good strategy is to make sure you're from New England, specifically rural Maine. I find that by growing up in Maine, the ability to "dance" or "interact" with girls is systematically bred out. This takes care of a lot of the work for you, and gets your foot out of the club door. The "Maine effect" doesn't happen in females, they seem to retain an innate ability to be socially competent against all odds. This is another plus for those looking to not get women: there won't be any awkward ones to relate to.

The second step is to be white. Now, this is not a requirement, but it really helps to have no sense of rhythm or flow when practicing setting down (the opposite of picking up) girls. I know some white guys with good style, but they are



still pretty good at being awkward if they put their heart into it. That's the key; you have to be invested in the goal. "Eyes on the prize" is perhaps the best mantra. Or maybe: "eyes awkwardly avoiding the prize."

Next, try to be very tall. I find this to be an excellent tool in not talking to girls, or really anyone at a party. Being a mile

above of being you're out of helps ward a in a ba heating slouch

avatar: clever all

A+ by benjaminsilverman

Avatar is a great movie not just because of the gorgeous computer graphics and eye-popping scenery. And it's a great movie not just because of the well crafted story, imaginative premise and a smooth narrative. Despite the heavy use of cliché one-liners, this was a script that had the thing so often missed in Hollywood blockbusters, effort. No, James Cameron's Avatar is a great movie because of the uncompromising political message that pops out at you in every single frame; resistance is justified when a people are occupied.

The story of Avatar goes as follows; it's 2154 and the corrupt economic system that governs humanity today hasn't changed one iota. Earth has been ravaged both ecologically and socially, there's no green left in nature nor jobs left in the economy. Yet capitalism remains unwavering and now that there's nothing left to exploit on Earth corporations must now hunt down resources in other star systems.

Our protagonist is Jake Sully, an ex-marine and paraplegic. So that he might afford new legs he enlists with a mining and mercenary corporation who are mining rare ores on Pandora. Pandora is an incredibly biodiverse world populated by an indigenous Paleolithic civilization of giant humanoid smurfs called the Na'vi. Sully's job is to be an "Avatar" whose purpose is to be like anthropologists during the imperial scramble for Africa, communicate with the native population on their own terms, learn their weaknesses, all subordinated to the desires of resource extraction. They're the soft hand of imperialism, setting up "schools" to teach the "savage" Na'vi English and other civilizing studies of little use. But all this is all a façade since corporation has no interest in any relationship with the Na'vi other than a brutal economic one.

The human invaders aim to expropriate them from their land, liberate the planet from it's inhabitants. The analogy with Palestine is particularly striking. The David and Goliath moment of the Na'vi shooting arrows at helicopters is like Palestinian children throwing rocks at Israeli tanks. The smashing of the Na'vi's 100 story home tree with rocket fire is like Palestinians having their homes demolished before their eyes, with seconds warning by Caterpillar bulldozers. There's even a scene where giant, armed bulldozers plow through a sacred grove to

the Na'vi without even noticing.

This is colonialism driven by an insatiable greed, covered up in the justification that the Na'vi are savages; they're not finding their world so why should they be allowed to?

Sully is meant to ingratiate himself with the Na'vi. He does this in a fundamentally different way than previous Avatar anthropologists. Previous Avatar anthropologists teach the Na'vi civilization, but Sully just lives with them. In science fiction we're used to the humans against the alien invaders and the humans are totally reversed. So as Sully, and he knows more about them he begins to sympathize with them. With this new solidarity, Sully leads the Na'vi and other paramilitary personnel in their resistance.

This is where the movie has been compared to other "going native" stories such as In the Heart of the Matter and Dune, where the main character goes and lives with an indigenous population. Sully, however, previously opposed to and leads them, and he also where many folks, including my friend, would say with Avatar lies, its quite obvious racism. Sully, however, couldn't free themselves, the movie is the messiah to come along to do it for them. It's certainly apt but there is something wrong with this version of this racist archetype. Sully, however, himself upon the Na'vi. He instead of the Na'vi and with those ways alone leads them to victory. And what a freakin victory! The final battle between the Ewoks and the turn of the Jedi except way cooler. It's a kick the ass out of the technological imperialists, drive them off their land, into the jungle and help but cheering.

Avatar is most certainly a mixed blessing. The Battle of Algiers by a long shot, it's a war movie with all the reactionary elements so what do people expect? But at the same time it is a movie that can be interpreted as a critique of the Afghan/Aboriginals/Native Americans and Vietnamese as they fight against the Americans/Australians/Americans. This fact alone gives it an A+ i

tions.

like this...



the conversation is the equivalent of being in another room, people know you're around but they're not going to go out of their way to chat. Also, being tall in the effort to maintain an awkward and ungainly posture. For example, the assessment with exposed pipes and ducts, it's easy to unattractively bump or hit your head on stuff for effect.

The final benefit of being tall is that girls are not, so rendering the possibility of normal dancing obsolete.

All of these techniques are useless though, if you smell good and can flirt.

To remedy these pesky attributes I usually don't do laundry, or if I have to wear something clean, I spill mustard on it. I also practice conversational incompetence. I try to come up with weird non-sequiturs and silly questions.

A few catch-phrases are: "My mom says I have to be in bed by eleven! Where's the soda? Is this the Sudoku house? Who is chaperoning?" These are effective in most situations. Occasionally, if I'm really trying to keep my personal space intact, I bring out the classic "I just pooped a little". That one clears the dance floor.

So guys, I hope this helps. Don't get discouraged if you still get girls your first few tries, it takes practice to become unattractive. I've trained long hours to get to this point, and if you believe in yourself, you can too. If you see a tall white guy from Maine awkwardly bopping his head on a pipe at the next party, be sure to say hi, and we can do a workshop. Until then, good luck. ■

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oh uvm how i missed thy grundle

by georgeloftus

Like most of you, I didn't get very much sleep the week before winter break. I was busy catching up on all the homework I didn't do, and even busier catching up on the homework I did but couldn't remember. I spent more time at the library in three days than I had all semester. I wrote over 25 pages of essays and read more journal entries of a 17th century english nobleman than I ever intended to. It was, without a doubt, the most amount of work I've done here at UVM. To sum it up, my last week here sucked ass. But then it was break, and it could not have come sooner.

The first week was great. I got to see all my friends from high school and go to all the restaurants that I missed so much. I went to the local movie theater and after I went grocery shopping, which is apparently my dad's favorite thing to do since

"I felt like Citizen Kane. I'm not even 20. I should not feel like Citizen Kane. Could the unthinkable have happened? Could I have missed school?"

I've left. I stayed up late and woke up even later. It was like summer... But in December! The only thing I had to do was chop wood, but that made feel like a badass, so it's not like it was an issue. It was so great being home.

The second week was just as much fun. I'm Catholic, so on the 25th I woke up nice and early, and I was lucky enough to get a Playstation 3. I showed my dad what a blu-ray was, and promptly had to get a mop after he shit his pants. The parents of my best friend went away to their camp, so we got to have a little get together at his house. I played flip cup for the first time and did pretty well. You can make fun of me if you want, but don't act like I was missing out on very much, flip cup is pretty boring.

The third week came and I was into a routine. I wouldn't be able to fall asleep until about 5:30 or 6:00 every morning, and I would wake up around 1:00 or so and enjoy the two hours of daylight I had. When I was feeling up to it I'd go to the kitchen and play a game I like to call "eat four pounds of turkey". The best part? I would win a lot. My best friend went on vacation at this point, so I could wake up as late as I wanted and spend all my time playing video games and watching movies older than my mom; it was great... at first.

The fourth week was way too much. I should have been so happy. I had a Playstation 3, I was home with my dad, and the thai restaurant that I pour 85% of my money into was finally open again, but I was still miserable. I felt like Citizen Kane. I'm not even 20. I should not feel like Citizen Kane. Could the unthinkable have happened? Could I have missed school?

No. I didn't miss school. What I did miss, though, was the life I had made here. I missed the mac and cheese from the marché and the way my stomach wanted to kill itself a half hour after I finished it. I missed having professors pretend to know my name and finally admit they didn't know it five minutes into a personal one-on-one conversation. I missed people knowing what I meant when I said "grundle." They say you can't go home again, but you can. You just have to wait for winter break to finish. ■

egory or typical cliché?

D+

by henrykellogg

It is quite possible that this January's Avatar used every cliché, hackneyed plot twist, and sci fi trope in the book. As I was first shown the lush landscapes of Pandora, (which never throughout the whole movie played my Elliott Smith station) I was ready for a trip out of this world, with new tricks and ideas and everything that makes sci fi worth watching. However once I arrived I found that humans were already there. Namely Sully, a cross between the Jersey Shore's "the situation" and a less hairy non-regenerative wolverine.

"Even though from time to time there was some massive beast that needed to be slain, mostly Sully just walked around with his new blue lady friend talking about the environment."

He was a true jock, perhaps the worst nightmare of the pasty pimply nerds that came to see Avatar. The bad guy already had a bad guy haircut. And the plot line was laid out and set in the first 5 minutes.

Yet as Sully goes off to play with Pocahontas, the 3-D CGI began to get to me. Maybe drinking a fifth of tequila before putting on 3D glasses is always a bad idea, but the graphics made me nauseous. They also began to get on my nerves. Even though from time to time there was some massive beast that needed to be slain, mostly Sully just walked around with his new blue lady friend talking about the environment. How humans were obtaining all the unobtainium and how that was bad for the trees and shark toothed butterflies. I almost expected to see a dark blue Al Gore in a loincloth start a lecture about carbon emissions, but no dice.

Like we had all expected it comes down to an epic battle and surprisingly the humans route the blue people and destroy their tree. This would have made an OK movie; a slim 2 hour thriller exposing the errors of colonialism with some cool CGI. But no, it was not to be. The movie tacked on an hour and a half happy ending most of which was directly ripped off from Gungans fighting battle droids in Phantom Menace. It had everything a blockbuster sci fi battle was supposed to have. Explosions, slapstick, Mechs, flying and yet somehow it seemed incomplete. When Sully's best friend was killed

there was no sadness. When his friend was miraculously raised, you kind of wished she had stayed dead. It might have been cool when the animals of the forest came to help the blue folks, but the guy behind me had no sooner than five minutes before said "I hope the animals don't come to help them, that would be so lame." But that's how it played out.

I stayed through all 3 hours of it, all the way to its predictable depressing conclusion. The aliens sent the humans "back to their own dying world"--which I say

was the movie's true intended message. Unless you truly care about the environment, drive a Prius, and interface with your sex pony tail, you are clearly going to die and it's your fault for doing so. You are either born amongst the blue people who are clear heirs to a beautiful forest paradise, or you're a lousy human who wants nothing but unobtainium just because you're naturally a massive jerk. Sci fi is supposed to be an exciting genre that makes us sit at the edge of our seats and gives us plenty to talk about afterwards. Avatar left me uninspired with only the taste of cheap tequila and a misspent night lingering on my lips.

Even though I personally had a wretched night watching it (one of my friends puked in the theater, high school kids were making fun of my sombrero, etc.), I will be charitable and give it a D+. The movie was clearly below average but I'll give it a plus because I'm a nice guy. ■

the existential wf

If we discover the Converse Ghost is a friendly ghost, should everyone stop trying to hunt it down?

trash.



i want you so bad

someone on campus catch your eye?
couldn't get a name?
submit your love anonymously
uvm.edu/~watertwr/iwysb.html

Leftover Lust from Finals Week Edition!

you drove a camo jeep. you smiled as you saw me and my friends dancing in our car. i waved and you waved back... you were cute. i'd love to ride in your jeep sometime

When: 12/3
Where: intersection of spear and main
I saw: man
I am: woman

you're in my obesity class, fall asleep sometimes i wish you were dreaming about me, my muscular sweater wearing paramour. if we study together, you definitely won't doze off.

When: Tues & Thurs
Where: Berinos class
I saw: hunk-babe in doc martins
I am: in love

You are a cute boy from MO. We both run the same path, but you run short and I run the half. We first met at the Grundle, and then again the same night, where you helped my friend change her spikes. If you think that you would want to hang out, you can find me where we both work out.

When: the other weekend
Where: at an event
I saw: an athletic boy
I am: a shy girl

We've spent the greater part of the night in the Cyber Cafe vigilantly working away on finals at the computers, you walked by and completely melted me with your gaze and your smile, a most pleasant distraction from all this work. I'd like to exchange the favor, and exchange smiles more regularly. I wish you all the best on finals, lets take a break together sometime before they're over.

When: End of Semester
Where: Cyber Cafe
I saw: a blissfully beautiful woman
I am: a debonaire man

We didn't know you found our towel walking so intriguing, but you are a little too vague. All the WDW RA's know they have HOT BOD'S. So, it will just have to stay in your dreams. See ya at the next floor meeting!!

We Saw: Supposed "Hot WDW Resident"
We Are: WDW RA's

we made out, and you punched me in the stomach. you don't remember. i want you so bad but im invisible to you.

When: late night
Where: isham
I saw: a girl
I am: looking for more

I think we'll have one chocolate peanut butter crunch, one vanilla health bar crunch, and one chocolate macadamia...? Never mind... We know exactly what we want... YOU (with sprinkles on top!) We could enjoy some karamel sutra together sometime! See you next Wednesday. Same time. Same place. Same order.

When: Wednesday 12/9
Where: Ben & Jerry's
I saw: Two Sexy Scoopers
I am: Three Sweet Girls

it might seem backwards that we first kissed when you were naked, except of course, for that striped scarf. but i'd wrap myself in you any day. so meet me wednesday at 3pm on the steps of bailey howe and i'll kiss you like i wish i had. (wear your scarf, i'll wear my red jacket, and we'll keep each other warm.)

When: naked bike ride
Where: outside harris millis
I saw: a woman
I am: a woman

I saw you singing at the Top Cats winter show. You sang "You Found Me" by The Fray, and Jason Mraz. I think you're the cutest guy ever, and your voice melted my heart. I'd love to hear you sing to me sometime.

When: Homecoming weekend & Winter show
Where: Top Cats show
I saw: a Top man
I am: a Top woman

You asked me for a pen I will give you ten for seven digits.

When: Sunday
Where: Library- 2nd floor
I saw: a man
I am: a woman

the ear

overheard a conversation in b-town?
was it hilarious? dumb? inspirational?
tell **the ear** and we'll print it.
uvm.edu/~watertwr/ear.html

2nd floor of Bailey Howe:

Boy: I walked passed this girl upstairs on her laptop and she was watching porn with her headphones on. Just casually like it was nothing.

Fish Bowl:

Girl 1: you want to be like santa claus? old and counting down your days?

Girl 2: Santa's never going to die you idiot.

Christie Hallway:

Gross Person 1: I hooked up with a homeless drug dealer!

Davis Center, Third Floor:

Girl chatting on the phone: Hi Mom...so the rash is mostly gone except for under my armpits. It should clear up soon!

Outside Kalkin:

Asshole kid smoking a cigarette with asshole friend: Haha, I just can't wait for the day that I am important enough to call random women "honey" and "sweetheart."

2nd Floor Bailey Howe Library:

Random Skate Bro: Dude if this exam was a rap battle, I bet you I'd win...

Davis Center Baño:

Girl: I'm not used to seeing you like this! Like, when we're both sober.

The Tunnel:

Stoner-bro 1: Alright, so it's a baby, but it's deep fried with double cheese and bbq sauce.

Stoner-bro 2: Oh, in that case fuck yeah!

1st Floor of Bailey Howe

Girl: I like to play with my boobs.

Boy: Really?

Girl: Yeah! You would too if you had them.

Boy: I like to punch them

Tupper Ground:

Girl 1: when was the last time we shotgunned beers in the shower?

Girl 2: ohhh right, before new moon.

Prez Fogel's Office:

WT Lova: i love the water tower. its way better than the cynic

Third Floor Library:

Girl speaking loudly on the phone: I need to go to Rite Aid for something, I can't say it right now.

Pause

Really? That'd be great, I only need like three.

Pause

Oh! They have them there? That'd be so embarrassing.

fash. knock-offs and you

a public service announcement brought to you by the water tower

with colbynixon

"Knock-offs," or counterfeit products that typically imitate high-end consumer goods have been around since the Greeks first created Nike sandals after the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.

These faux goods are very commonly seen in the clothing, shoe, bag, accessory (watch, sunglasses), and cereal industries, and may be tough to distinguish from the real product. "Why are knock-offs bad?" you might ask, "I just love my (f)Oakleys."

Knock-offs are cheap and easy to acquire, kind of like shitty Chinese food. And like that General Tso's, purchasing a knock-off might seem like a good idea at the time, but will be a decision that you will come to regret. That being said, if you choose to purchase a knock-off, here are some things you should consider:

1. Know that you are purchasing imitation goods. Those sunglasses that sell for \$10 at the county fair probably are not legit. Consider your surroundings and the price of the product you wish to buy. It could be most embarrassing to you if someone calls you out on those Ray-Bans that you purchased from the street vendor in Boston.
2. Do not buy knock-offs online. You have no idea the condition of the product, or how legit it appears to be. You do not want to end up paying for a Lacoste Polo that looks like the logo has been affixed with an Elmer's glue stick.
3. Buy your knock-offs while abroad. Most are produced overseas anyway, so you will just be cutting out the middleman. It is more difficult for people to call you out on a product that has labels in French or German, and in some cases, this might make the knock-off appear more authentic.

Thank you for taking the time to read about knock-offs and you. Next week learn about the dangers of the consuming raw vegetables. This is a public service announcement brought to you by The Water Tower and President Daniel Mark Fogel. ■



créatif stuffé.



Feeling a little *créatif*? Wishing *Vantage Point* was published more than once a semester? Well now you can submit your creative writing, short stories, poems, drawings, black and white photos, and any other *créatif* things to the water tower's new section, **créatif stuffé**. Send your submissions to thewatertownnews@gmail.com by Tuesdays at 4:00.

once there was a girl

by alextownsend

Once there was a girl, a sad little girl. She was sad because she wasn't happy and she was little because she wasn't big. That was the way things were. The girl lived in her room. Her room was in a house or a castle or a hut or a palace. She couldn't quite remember what was outside her room because it had been so long since she had opened her door.

There were times when she had a sneaking suspicion that she was a princess, but mostly she was sure that wasn't true. Mostly she couldn't even remember what her name was. She would make up names like Cindy or Maybelle or Flower-of-the-Moon. No one ever called for her, not even when it was time for dinner.

And so she sad. And so she was little.

One day little Cindy or Maybelle or Flower-of-the-Moon got tired of being in her room. It had been a long time in coming. She had stayed in there for months and months and years. She had read and reread every book on every shelf. She had worked to arrange every stuffed animal just so. She had played with all her toys endlessly. Finally though, she had gotten tired of it all. Her room had gotten smaller.

One day she went to her window and discovered that she had a balcony. There was a chance that it had always been there. She walked on it with timid steps, nervous that it would disappear. When she reached the railing she looked down and saw a boy standing and looking up at her.

She was surprised that she wasn't surprised. A moment ago she would have been hard pressed to say exactly what a boy was. As far as she could remember she had never seen another person in her life.

He looked up and she looked down and then she smiled because she couldn't think of anything else to do.

"Who are you?" asked the boy.

"I don't know," said the girl.

"Suddenly the boy threw a clump of mud at her. It hit the balcony's railing and splattered on the hem of her dress. He smiled at her happily. 'Then that means we can play!'"

her. It hit the balcony's railing and splattered on the hem of her dress. He smiled at her happily. "Then that means we can play!"

The girl smiled widely back at him and this time it was a real smile because she didn't know that she was doing it. Without a second thought she climbed down from the balcony and chased the boy through a bright and infinite expanse.

Behind her the castle—for it was a castle, though it sometimes looked like a palace or a house or a hut—and her room faded as though they had never been. The kingdom never got its princess.

In the end it got along without her, though they did miss her from time to time. ■

"Are you a princess?" he asked.

"I don't think so," she said. "Not usually, anyway."

"Why not?" The girl put a finger to her lips, looked up at the sky, and thought for a moment. "Suppose I don't want to be a princess?"

Suddenly the boy threw a clump of mud at

twas three days after christmas

by mikewhite

Twos three days after Christmas
And all through Grandma's house
Four in-laws began stirring
Two kids and two spouse.

While all of the kids were
Still snug in their beds
Nightmares of their 9 hour trip home
Danced in the heads.

When all of the sudden there came such a noise
It was grandma's miniature dog coming to bark at the boy.
The dog was far, far loud for its breed,
It got so excited that on the carpet it peed.

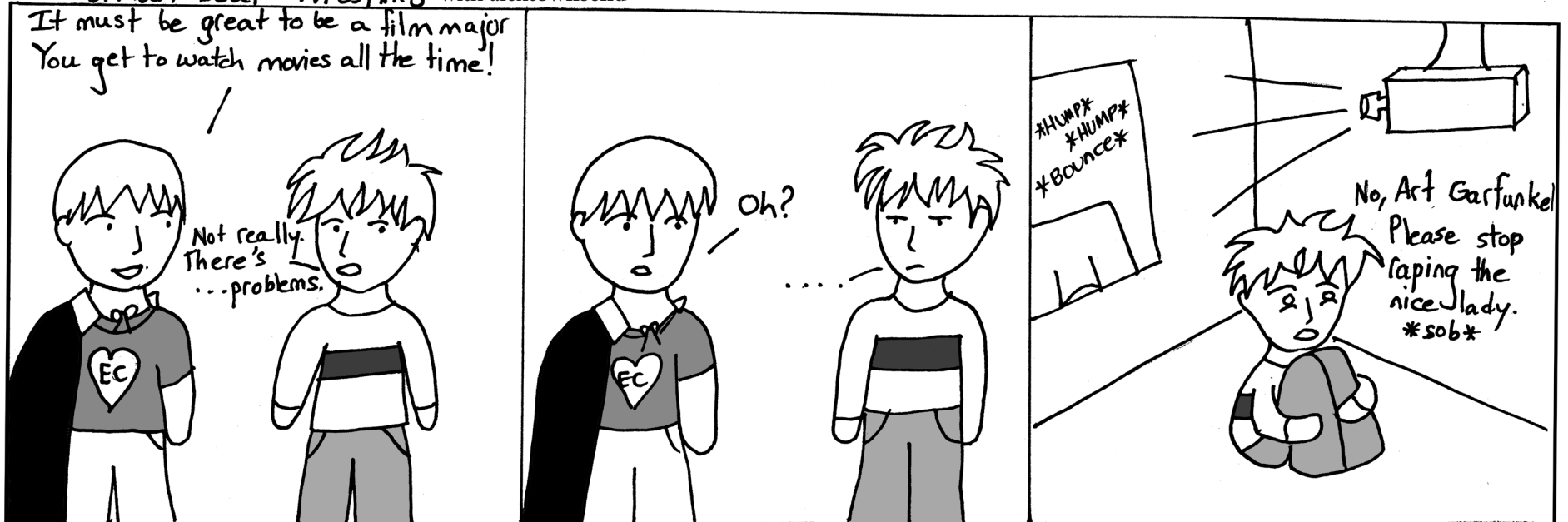
When at long, long last the noises ceased from the pup
Dad said something stupid, Mom said "shut the fuck up."
And all of our shouting it made such a clatter,
A family arguing over a trivial matter.

Grandma had grown so tired of our bickering voice,
She cracked a new bottle, her vodka of choice.
She settled down in her chair with her fresh cocktail,
Wishing for maybe next year just a christmas email.

Later that evening, taxi-cab on the step
Suitcases were retrieved, it was a schlep.
And all of the agony seemed to fly away
Kisses were exchanged, "Until another day!"

And onto the front porch
Grandma came and said with a shout
Merry Christmas to all
Now get the fuck out!

German Bear Wrestling with alextownsend



turning a corner

by alextownsend

There's a lot of power that comes from turning a corner. I didn't used to know that. It used to just be that I'd be in a hallway, I'd go around a corner and there'd be more hallway. I don't think like that anymore. Now I know corners can't be taken for granted. I wish I could tell someone that. Or move, moving would be nice.

What happened was I was in a hospital. I think I was a volunteer or maybe a patient. I can't remember anymore. I only remember walking a lot, walking and chewing gum. Anyway, it wasn't a regular hospital, or at least not one of the normal wings. This was the place where people went when they weren't dying, but also weren't going to get any better.

There were lots of creepy sorts there. They were twisted and bent and had lumps in weird places. A lot of them couldn't talk or move around on their own. They just made mumbly, screechy sounds and a few had motor-chairs to get around in.

I remember that they scared me. They didn't seem altogether human. It wasn't the weird shapes they had though, that was alright. It was their eyes. They had this horrible, dark, hungry look in their eyes all the time, like they just wanted to jump out of their skins and swallow you whole. There were times when I was so scared I thought they would do it too. It made me stay away from the biggest and toothiest of them.

There was one person I couldn't stay away from though. I wish I could remember what her name was. Did they call her Agnes? Did anyone call her anything?

She was old, but not the oldest one there, or the most misshapen. She had curly orange hair and she could get around, but only with the walker she always had with her. She couldn't speak at all though. I wasn't ever able to reckon how she could even eat. Her bottom lip hung low, lower than I ever thought a human lip could hang. It went down to around her shoulders, but it was stiff and

cardboard-like. It didn't look like it could ever be part of any natural face, but there it was. She was the corner woman. I don't think I ever saw her just standing in a room or following me down a hall. She was always coming around corners, even ones I swore she couldn't be behind. She'd suddenly be facing me more times than I could count when I walked around chewing gum and not paying attention to much. She always looked angry with me, like I'd shown up when I wasn't supposed to. She never even touched me, but that look'd send shivering jolts through me.

"I felt scared. I walked all around the building, seeing every strange, misshapen thing I'd ever passed before. Every time I came to a corner I felt my fear rise up all over in me."

Finally there was just a day that felt wrong. The sun was bright and all, but everything felt grey, like I was swimming around in a fog I couldn't see. It didn't make sense; I knew that even then. I felt like I couldn't decide a thing for myself. I smiled, I curled a finger in my hair, and my hand hurled my whole pack of gum in the trash. Then I walked.

My legs felt all stiff but also kind of jittery and my throat felt like it was trying to swallow down a big knot of frogs or something. I felt scared. I walked all around the building, seeing every strange, misshapen thing I'd ever passed before. Every time I came to a corner I felt my fear rise up all over in me. I didn't want to see Agnes and I knew I would.

When I went around the last corner though, I was almost relieved to see her. She looked less human than I'd ever seen and her eyes were hungrier than I'd seen

just about anything. Still, I was relieved, so relieved that I almost didn't notice that there was a room hadn't ever been there, didn't notice that there was a clock on the wall going slower with every tick.

All I could really see was the corner woman, her eyes. They sucked me in and made me freeze. The room disappeared and a tunnel was there. I heard a wind rushing but I didn't feel a thing.

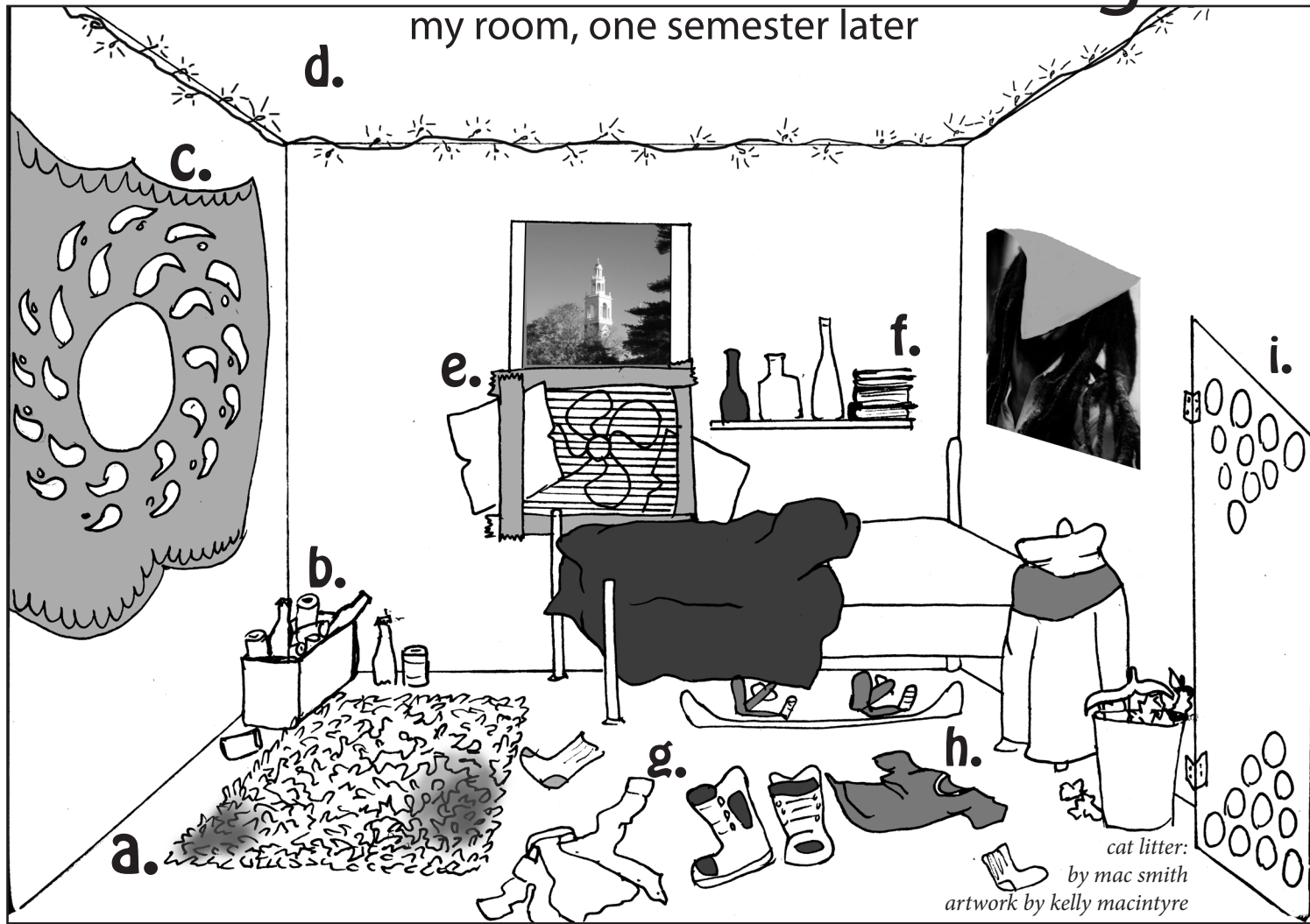
And then I just felt empty. I fell, and I saw me walk away while my new jaw drooped along the floor. ■

cat litter.



still waitin' on that mini fridge:

my room, one semester later



a. Shaggy Rug: This rug used to be pretty sweet. Now it's more of a beer/wine/liquor catcher. It still gets the job done.

b. Overflowing Recycling Bin: Don't judge, alright? It's Sunday fucking morning and I don't wanna throw it out yet. I'll get around to it.

c. Tapestry: I bought it from that sweet lady outside the Davis Center. Now everyone will think I'm totally heady.

d. Christmas Lights: Festive and against fire code. Take that res life!

e. Heady Flow System: Had to make it headier after that really close call. Now I measure my room's flow using the lighter system. Don't know what that is? Ask your friends. It's scientifically fool proof.

f. Nietzsche: For POLS 041. I told you I'd never read them.

g. Snowboard Stuff and Dirty Laundry: The best shredders in history never worried about how clean their room was. But maybe they had maids to help them clean...or moms.

h. Fuck where did my bong go?

i. Detached Closet Door: Used exclusively for beer pong and other drinking-related activities. I rock.

cat litter:
by mac smith
artwork by kelly macintyre

tunes.



band shirts.

by sarahmoylan

Sulfuric acid is, apparently, one of the most

corrosive substances we work with in organic chemistry lab. In light of this, my TA was especially vigilant and made sure we wore those awesome purple rubber gloves so we wouldn't spill acid on ourselves. As I understood it, spilling sulfuric acid on your skin could be an automatic trip to Fletcher Allen.

Naturally, about two hours after outfitting myself with said nifty purple gloves (and after about 35 consecutive minutes watching our demented acid mixture bubble and churn in a sophisticated distillation apparatus that even Severus Snape would be proud of), I clumsily removed the flask of acid from the complicated contraption and proceeded to spill it all over myself.

Now, here's the interesting part. My first reaction was not: "Oh no, it got on my skin, I'll have to go to the hospital to get this shit off or else risk growing an extra appendage off my elbow" or even "Yikes, there goes my lab technique grade this week." In fact, the first thing I exclaimed was, "OH, NOOOO! IT'S ON MY OF MONTREAL SHIRT!"

That's right. I'm one of those band shirt people. Of late, I have felt the need to buy a tee-shirt at almost every single concert I have attended, and this compulsive urge to purchase a garment has seemed to operate totally independently of how much I actually enjoyed the concert or not. For example (and don't tell the UPB kids I said this), I found the Of Montreal concert kind of disappointing. The acoustics were terrible, tall people kept getting between me and the band, and it was just kind of an off night in general. However, I'd like to note that these factors didn't stop me from getting a tee shirt before the show even started.

I have no idea what's gotten into me.

I remember going to a concert with my dad four or five years ago and on the way out he expressed surprise that I didn't ask for a souvenir shirt. I looked at him incredulously as if to say, "I saw the concert, it was good, I'll have fond memories of it that will last far longer than a tangible item, so why the hell would I pay extra for a t-shirt?"

Looking back, it's sound reasoning. But it's not helping me now. Since last April, I've collected shirts from Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, Rubblebucket Orchestra, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Of Montreal, and St. Vincent. Ironically, I somehow left tee-shirtless from the Decemberists, my favorite show of the school year so far (though I'll concede that I did leave with a logo-adorned canvas bag). All this tee-shirt hoarding makes me wonder if I fool myself into believing the shows are really better than they are by coming home with a wearable souvenir.

Realizing this, and also somewhat motivated by the negative effect buying shirts has on my bank account, I think I'm on a mission. (Given the time of year, I think I might even call it a New Year's Resolution.) Anyway, the next show I go to, I'm going only for the musical experience. No shirt purchase necessary. I won't even bring cash with me. I promise. And by the way, my Of Montreal shirt survived the sulfuric acid nightmare.

Upon returning to the dorm after lab, I effectively shellacked the acid-stained areas with a combination of detergents and stain removers and threw it in the wash for a couple of cycles. It's as good as new—no replacement needed. And maybe that's fate's way of telling me to stop buying shirts, already. ■



your weekly WRUV music review

with meghanoretsky

Beach House - Teen Dream (Sub Pop)
This band defines dream pop with haunting sleepscapes of drowsy beach guitar and strong, fizzy rhythms. Teen Dreams brings a sexy maturity to their sound - - diverse, animalistic, and wonderful. Instant Favorite.

Animal Collective - Campfire Songs (Reissue) (Paw Tracks)
The beautiful voices of Avey Tare and Noah Lennox (Panda Bear) swelling and waning a la Animal Collective's early folk side. Recorded on a cold November day on a screen porch in one take. "We wanted it to sound warm and inviting, like a campfire feels." - Avey Tare
Very mellow, very magnificent.

Spoon - Transference (Merge Records)
Not quite as danceable or badass as "Ga Ga Ga Ga" or cute and original as "Kill the Moonlight," but a new Spoon with drum-heavy attitude and a rocking rawness. This is the first of Spoon's seven LPs that is self-produced. Reviews say it sounds like Pavement and Guided By Voices in its low-fi aesthetic. I guess I can hear them a little bit, too. I would say that quality sounds more like garage rock similar to The Strokes.
Similar Artists: The Walkmen, New Pornographers

Vampire Weekend - Contra (XL)
Catchy, Fun African beats + Paul Simon's "Graceland" = "Contra." Very much like VW's debut- if you liked that one you will like this more! For some reason I feel that their music is defining our generation.

shuffle.

with julietcritsimilios

for haiti

Amen Omen-Ben Harper
What started as a whisper/slowly turned into a scream/searching for an answer/where the question is unseen

Belief-John Mayer
Belief is a beautiful armor/but makes for the heaviest sword/we're never gonna beat this/if belief is what we're fighting for

Miracle-Foo Fighters
Everything that we survived/it's gonna be alright/just lucky we're alive/got no vision I've been blind

There's Hope-India.Arie
That's when I learned a lesson/that it's all about your perception/it's about the size of faith in your heart

Make You Feel Better- Red Hot Chili Peppers
In a world that has run amok/I've got to set my sights just to get struck

Look After Me-Hot Chip
The words and images come back to me/back to me/look after me and I will look after you

Hope-Five for Fighting
But you gotta have hope/you gotta have something/there's always a reason to break

Crying Shame-Jack Johnson
By now/it's beginning to show/a number of people are numbers who ain't coming home